

January 27, 2023

Testimony IN SUPPORT of H.B. 6484, An Act Concerning Certain Harvesting of Horseshoe Crabs

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the opportunity to testify on behalf of H.B. 6484.

Horseshoe crabs are listed as “vulnerable” under IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature), although they are not listed under the Endangered Species Act. Horseshoe crabs are over-harvested for their blood, which is used for biomedical purposes. Despite the horseshoe crabs being returned to the oceans after they’re bled, the mortality rate is high, hovering around 30%. Not allowing the hand-harvesting of horseshoe crabs or the collection of their eggs would give the species the ability to recover their population numbers.

It is especially important given that climate change has affected the horseshoe crabs habitat, leading to more difficulties in spawning.

Horseshoe crabs are hundreds of millions of years old and, as such, are a keystone species for other marine wildlife. Shorebirds eat their eggs, they are food for alligators, turtles and fish species, and horseshoe crabs help decompose plant and animal matter in the oceans.

To preserve the natural marine world, forbidding hand harvesting of horseshoe crabs and their eggs is essential.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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